DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 383 224 FL 023 070

AUTHOR Tahrawi, Khalil A.
TITLE Improving the Oral Language Skills of the Arabic-as-a-Second-Language Student by Introducing Dialectal Vocabulary, Minimizing Introduction of Other Language Skills, Reducing Corrections during the Uttering Process, Avoiding Excessive Grammar, and Consideration of the Student's Culture.
PUB DATE 95
NOTE 64p.; Ed.D. Practicum, NOVA Southeastern University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Arabic; Classroom Techniques; Cultural Context; Dialects; Educational Strategies; *Error Correction; *Grammar; Listening Skills; *Oral Language; Secondary Education; Second Language Instruction; *Second Languages; Skill Development; Speech Skills; Standard Spoken Usage; Uncommonly Taught Languages; *Vocabulary Development

ABSTRACT

The practicum reported was designed to improve listening and speaking skills of 30 (grades 7-11) learners of Arabic as a second language. The teacher/researcher used these classroom instructional strategies: introducing carefully selected dialectal vocabulary and language forms; concentrating only on oral skills; avoiding heavy introduction of other language skills; reducing teacher correction during utterances; easing of pronunciation requirements, especially for vowels at word end; and de-emphasizing grammar. Analysis of student performance revealed improved oral skills when the skills are introduced intensively at the beginning of the language learning process and without interference of other language skills. It was also found that students preferred to spend more time listening and speaking than reading and writing. It is suggested that speaking the language changes student attitudes toward the Arabic instruction and may lead to improvements in reading and writing skills. It was also found that using Modern Standard Arabic can minimize confusion and frustration of students of different cultural backgrounds. Contains 16 references. (Author/MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 383 224

Improving the Oral Language Skills of the Arabic-As-A-Second-Language Student by Introducing Dialectal Vocabulary, Minimizing Introduction of Other Language Skills, Reducing Corrections During the Uttering Process, Avoiding Excessive Grammar, and Consideration of the Student's Culture

by

Khalil A. Tahrawi

Cluster 57

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Khalil A. Tahrawi
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

A Practicum I Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
of the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

1995

FL023070

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This Practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Edward N. Vest
Edward Vest, Ph.D.

Assistant Principal
Title

Alexandria, Virginia
Address

March 13, 1995
Date

This Practicum report was submitted by Khalil A. Tahrawi under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

March 26, 1995
Date of Final Approval of Report

William W. Anderson, Ph.D., Advisor

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank my students who were responsible and cooperative in the implementation period. I also have a great gratitude for my advisor Dr. William Anderson who did not spare any effort to guide me in the right direction. I also thank all my teachers who helped in building my knowledge and paved the way to reach this point. Those teachers are Dr. Lorinne Vitchof, Dr. Maryellen Maher, Dr. Noreen Webber, Dr. Warren Groff, Dr. Thomas Curtis, and Dr. Kenneth Twel. I also have great thanks to my wife and children for their sacrifices and support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ii

TABLE OF CONTENTS iii

Chapter

I INTRODUCTION 1

Description of Community 1
Author's Work Setting and Role 3

II STUDY OF THE PROBLEM 5

Problem Description 5
Problem Documentation 7
Causative Analysis 8
Relationship of the Problem to the Literature 11

III ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS 16

Goals and Expectations 16
Expected Outcomes 16
Measurement of Outcomes 17

IV SOLUTION STRATEGY 24

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions 24
Description of Selected Solution 26
Report of Action Taken 30

V RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS 42

Results 43
Discussion 45
Recommendations 50
Dissemination 55

REFERENCES 57

Abstract

Improving the Oral Language Skills of the Arabic-As-A-Second-Language Student by Introducing Dialectal Vocabulary, Minimizing Introduction of Other Language Skills, Reducing Corrections During the Uttering Process, Avoiding Excessive Grammar, and Consideration of Student's Culture. Tahrawi, Khalil A., 1995: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Arabic Language/Oral language Skills/Arabic Dialects/Foreign Language/Language Improvement/Multicultural/ESL/Education/Schooling/Teaching.

This Practicum was designed to improve the listening and speaking skills of the students who learn Arabic as a second language. The author applied the following strategies: introducing carefully selected dialectal vocabulary and language forms, concentrating only on oral skills, avoiding heavy introduction of other language skills, reducing the interference from teachers for correction during the uttering process, easing of pronunciation especially vowels assigned for the end of the words, and avoiding excessive grammar.

Analysis of the data revealed that students perform better in the oral language skills if these skills are introduced intensively at the beginning of the language process and without interference of the other language skills. It also showed that students preferred to spend more time in listening and speaking more than reading and writing. Speaking the language changes the attitude of the students towards the Arabic class and may lead to improvements of the reading and writing skills. The author also found that using Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) will minimize the confusion and frustration of the students of different cultural backgrounds.

****

Permission Statement

As a student in the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies, I do (X) do not ( ) give permission to Nova Southeastern University to distribute copies of this Practicum report on request from interested individuals. It is my understanding that Nova Southeastern University will not charge for this dissemination except to cover the costs of microfiching, handling, and mailing of the materials.

March 26, 1995
(date)

Khalil Tahrawi
(signature)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The groups that constitute the school community are families in the Arab and Muslim communities. They live in a large metropolitan area which includes two states and a cosmopolitan urban center. Most of the families do not live close to the school, with a few living as far away as 55 miles from the school. The atmosphere and culture of the school are very important to these families and draws them into the school.

The majority of the parents of the students are living in the United States temporarily, as they are either diplomats or work for international organizations, and plan to return to their nature countries. A second group of parents is made up of immigrants, with a third group made up of native-born Muslim Americans. Some of the parents in the second and third groups work for the school or are businessmen and women in the area. As assessment of the educational background of the parents, obtained from student files, shows that 82 percent of the parents are college graduates.

The author's work setting is a school which accommodates pre-school students through the twelve grade of the secondary school. The school was founded in 1984 by a Middle Eastern country to serve the needs of its citizens while they are residing in the area, as well as other Arab countries and the Muslim community living with the school's boundaries.

The school was established to allow its students to continue to pursue Arabic and Islamic studies while residing in the United States so that when they returned to their homeland they would not have fallen behind their classmates. Arabic and Islamic studies are not offered in the public schools of the area; it is only offered in one community college and in the mosques on Sundays. Over time, the school has developed a dual curriculum to encompass Arabic language as well as English language studies, including a full range of American college preparatory classes for those students planning to enroll in an American institution of higher learning.

In order to met the needs of the diverse student body, the school has established programs of English-As-A-Second-Language (ESL) and Arabic-As-A-Second-Language (ASL), as well as Islamic studies for non-Arabic speakers.

Physically, the school is made up of two campuses. One campus has both boys and girls and accommodates pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade. The second campus consists of two separate schools, one for boys and one for girls. The boys' school has grades 3 through 12 and the girls' school has grades 2 through 12. The number of students on the two campuses totals approximately 1,260. Separate classes are maintained for each sex from the third grade through the twelfth; however, the children on the second campus share the library, cafeteria, language lab, and playground. Special schedules are used to enforce a separation of the sexes.

Each school has its own principal, vice-principal, and two secretaries, with its own instructional staff, except for a crossover of selected teachers occurring to utilize

the staff efficiently. Overall administrative and support responsibilities for both schools rests with the Director General and his staff located in the central office on the second campus.

Author's Work Setting and Role

The author is an Arabic language author. His first assignment was in 1968 where he taught Arabic in a secondary school for nine years. His interest in teaching Arabic-As-A-Second-Language started when he wrote his thesis about the Arabic bilingual program in large mid-western American cities. His findings reflected the significance of learning Arabic on the achievement of other subjects, such as math, science, and social studies learned by the children.

His second assignment came in 1984 when he was hired at his present school as a teacher of Arabic. The author found that half of the students in grades 1 through 6 were in need of an intensive Arabic language program. The author developed the program from scratch. He tested the students to place them in the right group and prepared the instructional materials. In the following years, he was in charge of the program, eventually becoming the coordinator and department head.

Through these years he faced a lot of challenges. The school did not have enough places, textbooks, or other learning aids, such as instructional materials, for the language lab. He taught regular Arabic for the 6th grade and ASL for grades 7 through 11. The students have different language levels and different backgrounds.

The author currently teaches three different groups: advanced, intermediate, and beginners. He prepares lesson plans, instructional materials, and tests. In addition, he has a free hand to introduce any materials or approaches that will be helpful for the students to learn from.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The ASL program was established to serve the following groups:

1. Students whose parents are Arab, but speak Arabic dialects, and do not read and write fluently.

2. Students whose parents are Arab, but do not speak, read, or write Arabic.

3. Students who are not Arabs, but Muslim, and do not speak, read, or write Arabic.

4. Students who are native-born Americans, who do not speak, read, or write Arabic.

The initial goal of the ASL program was to mainstream the non-Arabic-speaking students into the regular Arabic language program. In the first four years of the school's operation, the ASL teachers concentrated on reading and writing skills. In the fifth year, the school curriculum committee recommended that the previous goal of the ASL program was not reasonable and that the ASL students were not ready to be mainstreamed. As a result of that, the goal of the ASL program was changed. The new goal is to enable the ASL students to master the Arabic language so that they may read and understand Arabic books, The Holy Qur'an, and the sayings of the Prophet Mohammed *{Peace Be Upon Him}*. This means that the students are not required to demonstrate an ability to join the regular Arabic language classes. In the 1993-94

school year, the principal of the girls' school decided to mainstream all the ASL girls regardless of their Arabic language level of achievement.

The ASL program has faced many problems through the ten years of its operation, such as a lack of student motivation, lack of textbooks, insufficient learning aids and placement tests, lack of proper materials for a language lab, and the inability to hire trained ASL teachers, but it was able to overcome these shortcomings. The program adopted two series of books: one for the elementary level and one for both the intermediate and secondary levels. Some of the non-Arabic aids were redesigned with the help of three learning aids specialists for effective use in the instructional ASL program. Placement tests and curriculum outlines were prepared by the author himself.

Despite all these improvements, other problems still remain; particularly in regard to improving the oral language skills. Most of the teachers do not concentrate on listening and speaking skills, thinking that these skills can not be taught and the students will pick up the language in time, particularly after they build-up their vocabulary. In addition, proper equipment and materials are still needed in the language lab. Another difficulty that needs to be addressed is use of the English language in the classroom and the unspoken Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) in giving instructions.

In short, the problem is that the Arabic oral language skills of the 30 non-Arabic speaking students, grades 7 to 11, who have spent at least one year in the program do not meet the expectations of the Arabic language curriculum guidelines.

Problem Documentation

According to the results drawn from the mid-year school placement test, the 30 students who are in the author's power base did not meet the oral skills curriculum guidelines of the ASL program. The curriculum oral language skills guidelines of the ASL program is that by the end of the first year in the ASL program students should have completed the following:

-- Recognize classroom objects and materials; such as, book, pen, notebook, paper, desk, door, etc.

-- Learn the most frequent command verbs; such as, read, write, listen, etc.

-- Respond to questions asked in Arabic about oneself or the classroom setting; such as, What is your name? How old are you? etc.

-- Know and use the courtesy forms; such as, thank you, hi, sorry, please, etc.

-- Conduct simple conversations regarding homework assignments, the library, preparing oneself for school in the morning, ordering food in a restaurant, the weather, etc.

-- Demonstrate the ability to ask questions in Arabic regarding one's needs and/or desires; such as, "May I have a pen?" "Can I use the bathroom?" etc.

The results of the mid-year placement test given to the 30 students were as follows:

(1) Ten students recognized all 20 classroom objects and materials they were asked to identify.

(2) Twelve students were able to respond to 20 randomly selected command verbs.

(3) Eight students were able to answer orally the ten questions asked about oneself and/or the classroom setting.

(4) Fourteen students were able to demonstrate their knowledge and use of at least one form of the Arabic greeting, thanks, apology, and/or complement.

(5) Ten students were able to conduct simple conversations regarding two of the following situations: homework assignment, borrowing from the library, ordering food from an Arabic restaurant, preparing oneself for school in the morning, introducing oneself to others, or discussing the weather.

(6) Five students were able to ask proper questions in Arabic regarding the Arabic classroom directions and/or instructions, or the classroom setting in general.

Causative Analysis

As stated in the problem description, the oral language skills are not given sufficient time during the instructional period. ASL teachers concentrate on reading and writing so they can prove that the student is able to be mainstreamed into the regular Arabic language classes. Some of the teachers who intended to improve the oral skills were not able to do so because of a lack of materials in the language lab and placing beginner students with advanced students.

Use of the English language in the Arabic language classes occasionally and when needed is acceptable, but currently, English is used for a large percentage of the time. In the school setting, the English language is dominate and used inclusively. It is used as a communication tool among the students themselves and between the teachers

and the students. Even the school communications, such as announcements, schedules and ceremonies, are conducted in English.

An additional problem in the ASL program is that there is a gap between Modern Standard Arabic, which the ASL students learn in their Arabic language classes, and the Arabic dialects which are spoken by the Arabic-speaking students in day-to-day conversation. The difference is a burden in communication between the two groups and does not encourage the non-Arabic speaker to speak Arabic freely. The students always wonder and ask "Why are we learning a language which is not spoken by the Arabs themselves?"

Another problem is the intensive use of grammar and different language forms in the early stages of learning. The textbooks which are used in the program are set to teach grammar and different forms of the language, at a very early stage of the learning process--even for beginners--such as different uses of pronouns and the differences between the masculine and the feminine.

The different cultural backgrounds and motives of the ASL students is an additional burden for the teachers and limits the progress of the students in learning the Arabic language. The program has students who are native-born Americans and students from fourteen different nationalities with different traditions and customs. However, despite this, all the students are Muslim, which brings a common bond to the playing field. There also are several different motives for taking the ASL class. Some of students are in the school because their parents do not want to send them to public

school for fear of exposing them to a different culture which might contradict their Islamic values. Some of the students are there to learn The Holy Qur'an and the Islamic principles and rules. A third group of students want to preserve the Arabic language and culture. Few of the students have all of these motives at the same time.

Also, there is a lack of cooperation and coordination between the teachers of the ASL program and the teachers of the regular Arabic language classes. This lack of cooperation limits the ability of the ASL teacher to help identify the students who need to be placed in an intensive Arabic language learning program from those who are able to join the regular Arabic language classes. The regular Arabic language teachers always try to get rid of the underachievers in Arabic language courses by transferring them to the ASL program. At the same time, they refuse to integrate partly or fully, any student who is recommended by the ASL teacher to be transferred into the regular program. The integration of both groups once a week, as an example, would help improve the ASL students' oral language skills, particularly if the time is used wisely to allow communication and interaction between the two groups.

The lack of cooperation and coordination is not limited to just the Arabic language programs but extends to the Islamic studies program as well. The lack of cooperation between the Arabic language program and the Islamic program is not helpful to the progress of the students and it is aggravating the problem of oral language skill development. Students who attend the ASL program usually attend the Islamic class for non-Arabic speakers. Students in the Islamic classes are required to

recite verses of The Holy Qur'an and that by itself enhances and improves the Arabic speaking skill.

Lack of support by students' parents is an added problem. Some of the parents are not Arab and they cannot help their children practice speaking at home. The parents of some of the students speak a language other than English, but not Arabic. The Arabic language is not a priority for these students, as they need to learn English first, because they live in the United States, and, second, they need to maintain and/or learn their parent's language so they can all communicate at home on a daily basis, the Arabic language comes last.

Some of the specific causes of the problem setting are:

(1) Lack of sufficient time provided for practicing oral language skills.

(2) Intensive use of English in classroom instruction and communication.

(3) Exclusive use of Modern Standard Arabic and ignoring the spoken languages (dialect) used by native-speaking Arabs.

(4) Lack of use of the language lab.

(5) Intensive use of grammar and confusing language forms in the early stages of the course.

(6) Lack of cooperation and coordination between the ASL program and the regular Arabic language and Islamic studies programs.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

The Arabic language, which is the target language of this Practicum, is distinguished from the English language, which is the first language of the target group

by many values. Nine of the 28 letters of the Arabic language alphabet do not have similar letters in the English alphabet. Letters in Arabic language have to be connected to each other when forming a word, which is not true in English. The short vowels of the Arabic language do not effect the pronunciation of the word only, they might also change the meaning of the word. In addition, Arabic writing goes from right to left and the sentence may start with a noun, pronoun, or verb. The adjective in the Arabic language must follow the noun; for example, in English, one says, "I have a red car," while in Arabic, one says "I have a car red." Some Arabic letters are similar in pronunciation and writing, but the dots above and underneath words are a factor in pronunciation, and the feminine form in Arabic does not have the same form as does the masculine (Aziz, 1980).

Because of these unique characteristics in the Arabic language, it is important that students be familiar with the sounds of the language by concentrating on their listening and speaking skills. The author is convinced that the use of Modern Standard Arabic only, is not very helpful to the student in speaking Arabic. Students of the ASL program always complain that the textbook does not help them speak the language. Currently, the school's administration is not satisfied with the students' performance, especially in speaking Arabic.

The school enforced the teaching of Modern Standard Arabic through the last ten years, despite teachers' complaints and the students' failure to meet the expectations set in the Arabic language curriculum guidelines. The school believes in

what Abboud (1986) believes, that learning Modern Standard Arabic first will enable the learner to speak and understand the different Arabic dialects. Modern Standard Arabic is universal and the written language of the Middle East. It is the oral medium of expression used in formal situations ranging from radio newscasts to television to lectures and other formal addresses given at international conferences. The school stand in supporting Modern Standard Arabic is supported by the work of two professors from Johns Hopkins University (Jerald Lampi) and Temple University (Roger Allen) who conducted an Arabic language workshop for ASL teachers in 1990.

Allen (1985) designed a proficiency guidelines for all Arabic language skills, and does not see any alternative to using Modern Standard Arabic. He says that most of the institutions which offer courses in colloquial dialects do not succeed in taking their students to advanced levels. His guidelines are based on Modern Standard Arabic.

The ASL students are considered a minority in the school and the native-born Arabic speakers are the majority of students. In order to enforce the Arabic spoken language (dialects), oral skills should be introduced to the ASL student if the school administration wants to see them speaking Arabic. The only place for the ASL students to learn and speak Arabic is at school.

Haddad (1989) faced the same problem. Her students could not communicate effectively with waiters in an Arabic restaurant. The waiters could not fully understand the order placed orally by the students in Arabic and the students could not understand

the spoken Arabic of the waiters, even though the students had already completed one course of Arabic language at the time.

Masri (1994) found the main problem of students was that they were not able to communicate among themselves in Arabic, in an Arabic language class after completing some of the Arabic language courses.

The ASL students' complaints were supported by Ellis (1984) and Wahaba (1985). Both agree that planned dialogues in the textbooks do not help the students in speaking Arabic.

According to Milk (1989), the pulling out of the ASL students from their normal classes is deepening their oral language skills problem. The students are missing the chance of direct contact with native-speaking Arabs and they are psychologically harmed by being isolated in a different classroom.

The differences in the students' cultural backgrounds is another factor in limiting the progress in the same group. A bibliographical research by Wennerstrom (1993) shed some light on the effect of cultural background differences of students. He found that these differences may limit the student's progress in learning Arabic. Because of this limitation, the students may be unable or unwilling to communicate as freely as a native-speaker in a written or oral form. In the author's setting, the students come from different countries and they may speak their parent's language in addition to English.

Finally, the teachers of the ASL program and their students complain regarding the method used in teaching oral language skills. This complaint is backed by bibliographical research completed by Lev (1991). He stated that all the traditional methods used in teaching Arabic often do not meet their expectations; the grammatical and natural acquisition approaches can not be depended upon to enhance and speed learning the speaking skills.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The following goals and outcomes were projected for this Practicum. The primary goal was to improve the oral language skills of 30 students (grades 7 to 11) who are learning Arabic as a second language, and who had spent at least one year in the ASL program, but did not meet the expectations of the Arabic language curriculum guidelines. To achieve this goal, the 30 students were expected to:

- identify 20 classroom objects and/or materials;
- learn at least 20 command verbs;
- respond in Arabic to at least 10 questions about self and/or the classroom setting;
- demonstrate the ability to use at least one form of thanks, greeting, apology, complaint, or complement; and
- conduct a simple conversation regarding self, feelings, assignment, home, weather, library, or cafeteria, or demonstrate the ability to ask questions in Arabic.

Expected Outcomes

Upon completion of the implementation period of this research proposal, the author will provide anecdotal records to reveal the following:

(1) When asked in Arabic to identify randomly selected classroom objects and materials, at least 25 of the 30 students will be able to respond correctly in Arabic.

(2) When asked to respond to 20 of the most frequently used command verbs, 25 students will be able to respond accurately.

(3) At least 25 students will answer 10 randomly selected questions regarding oneself and/or the classroom setting.

(4) At least 25 students will demonstrate the ability to respond properly to an Arabic greeting, thanks, apology, complement, or complaint, and the ability to use these courtesy forms correctly.

(5) At least 25 students will be able to conduct at least three randomly selected conversations about homework assignments, borrowing a book from the library, ordering food from a restaurant, preparing oneself for school in the morning, introducing oneself or others, or the weather.

(6) At least 25 students will be able to orally ask ten questions in different situations, based upon what they have learned; and, when given the answer, will be able to provide the question, in Arabic, in order to demonstrate their ability to use Arabic interrogative pronouns, such as when, where, who, how, etc.

Measurement of Outcomes

In order to measure the outcomes, the author prepared the following lists of materials which were introduced in the implementation period:

(1) A list of all classroom objects and materials.

(2) A list of the most frequent functional verbs (command) used in the Arabic language class or in a school setting.

(3) A list of the most frequently used forms of courtesy.

(4) A list of words needed to respond to a question about oneself: name, age, grade, school, address, nationality, family members, etc.

(5) A list of words and forms needed to conduct conversations regarding the weather, one's needs and/or desires, complaints, and assignments.

(6) A list of all interrogative pronouns which are to be learned, in order to ask questions or respond to a given answer by forming a question.

The author also prepared progress reports for each outcome. The reports contained the name of the students and list of items learned. Each outcome was evaluated orally. The result of the observation of students' responses was recorded. For example, if Ali was asked to identify 10 objects in the classroom, the author put a check (√) in front of each item he successfully identified in Arabic.

The second outcome was measured by asking the student to respond functionally to the command verb. The author addressed the student by saying, "open the door," or pointed to the door if the word had not been introduced before.

The third outcome was measured by simply asking the student the question by saying, for instance, "How old are you?"

The measurement of the fourth outcome comes from observing the student use and response to greetings, thanks, apology, and so forth. It also was measured by the author greeting the student or by thanking him, for cleaning the black board, for instance.

The fifth outcome was measured by assigning students in pairs to prepare an oral conversation and present it in front of the class. The conversation was to be related to the weather, the homework assignments, or anything related to the classroom, school environment, or home.

There were two parts to the six outcomes. The first was to demonstrate the ability of asking a properly phrased question in Arabic and to prove the student's ability to use the interrogative pronouns. A student was given an answer for a question and either expected to form a question for it, or only to identify the right interrogative pronoun. For example, "I was in the library" or "I solved three problems." Students were then asked to state the right question.

Discussion of the Evaluation Instruments

Classroom and Objects

In the implementation period all the classroom objects, such as the door, window, clock, blackboard, cabinet, desks, chairs, shelf, etc. were tagged. Flash cards for all the classroom objects and materials were used, particularly with the non-Arabic-speaking students. To observe and report their progress of recognizing these objects, the students were asked to identify the objects (name them) by pointing to them or by showing the card which carried the picture of the object. Students also were asked to play the role of teacher and ask others to identify the objects by pointing to them and saying, "What is this ...?" At the end of introducing all the objects through the

implementation period, a sheet with pictures of all the classroom objects was given to the students and they were asked to identify the objects in Arabic. The same sheet was given out to the students at different times and the author called the name of the pictures randomly and the students were asked to number the pictures according to the sequence in which they were called.

Command Verb

The most frequently used command verbs were introduced through the implementation period according to their needs in the classroom setting. Most of the verbs used were functional and were easy to demonstrate to the students without giving the meaning in English. Those words not easy to demonstrate were explained in English to avoid misunderstandings. For example, a student was asked to stand by the door, then the author would say, "Come in and sit down." in Arabic. The author would hold a book in his hand and open the book and say, "I opened the book. Open your book, Mohammed."

Students were carefully observed through the classroom sessions to follow their progress in responding to these command verbs. These observations were recorded daily on the students' progress report.

At the completion of introducing these verbs, students were given twenty different sentences and each sentence used one of the command verbs. Each target word was underlined and students were asked to give the meaning for each word in English.

Forms of Courtesy

In greeting forms, the author managed to use the most common ones most frequently used by Arabic language speakers; such as, "Assalamu aalykum" (Peace be upon you). This kind of greeting is used at any time of the day. The other forms, such as "Hi!," "Good morning," and "Good evening," and their responses were also introduced. It was not easy to introduced both "Good morning" and "Good evening" because of the time of day. Students who had classes before 12 p.m. were able to learn first, "Good morning" and the students who had their Arabic language classes after 12 p.m. were able to learn "Good evening" easily because it was used by the author. The author managed to introduce the other part of time greeting in a story session.

Students also were observed daily to record their response to the greeting. Students were asked to greet the class with the right form, whether they came to the class on time or were late.

In the other courtesy forms, such as "thank you," and "sorry," students were taught one form and its response. A short conversation between the student and the author or between two students were demonstrated in the class on the right occasion, such as when the student asked the author to lend him a pen or pencil. In order for the student to receive the pen from the author, he had to form his request in Arabic. The student also had to thank the author and the author then responded in return. When a student sneezed in class and followed that by praising god, "Thanks God," the author

responded by saying "God bless you." Students were encouraged to praise God and say "God bless you" as often as appropriate.

In implementing the other forms of courtesy, such as the complementary ones, the author always commented on good behavior or work by saying, "excellent," "good," "wonderful," and other dialectal terms. In order to help memorize these forms, the students were asked to use them in their own conversations.

Conversations

Since the main goal of the implementation period was to improve the speaking skill of the students, the author always spoke in Arabic and demanded that the students respond in Arabic. To conduct a conversation is the fruit of the study. The author used more than one method to help students and encourage them to break the psychological obstacle of speaking the language. He used such things as recorded conversations, videos, the Arabic radio station, and written illustrated materials. Students were embarrassed at the beginning but they soon became willing to speak Arabic without pushing. Prizes were promised to the best couple who conducted the longest dialogue and used the most Arabic vocabulary.

Questions and Answers

A significant amount of time was used to introduce the interrogative pronouns, such as the ones used to ask about persons, things, places, time, conditions, and numbers. A poster was mounted in the front of the classroom with these pronouns and examples for questions. These pronouns were presented gradually, according to their

frequency and use in the classroom. The first pronoun to be introduced was "what" to help recognize each other when asked, "What is your name?" and to help identify the classroom objects when asked, "What is this?"

The author used different ways to teach these pronouns and to ensure that the students progressed. He gave the students different answers and asked the students to form questions for each; he gave the students a phrase which indicated the time or the place and asked the students to form questions for them or give a form of question without the interrogative pronouns, and asked the students to pick the right pronoun for each.

The students usually were able to find the right pronoun if they understood the sentence or the phrase. Some of these methods were supported with written assignments.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The problem the author faced was that the Arabic oral language skills of the 30 non-Arabic-speaking students, grades 7 to 11, who had spent at least one year in the ASL program, did not meet the expectations of the school's Arabic curriculum guidelines.

From a review of the literature, the author found that other teachers having a similar setting faced the same problem. For example, Haddad (1989) and Younes (1991) believed that using Modern Standard Arabic only was not helpful for the students to speak Arabic without great difficulty.

Haddad (1989) combined both Modern Standard Arabic and reasonable Arabic dialects together when she dealt with oral skills. She called this "the middle language approach." She stated in her article, and told the author personally, that she found that the students' speaking skill improved after the first three months of the semester. Students were able to ask questions, respond to questions asked, and conduct accepted Arabic conversations.

Younes (1991), however, did not use the same approach. He introduced dialogues in Arabic dialects first, and after he felt that the students' speaking skill had improved, he then introduced a combined approach of Modern Standard Arabic and

dialects. It is very useful for a second language learner to use what he has learned to communicate with native speakers.

Rammuny (1977) calls for the Arabic language teaching professionals to start teaching for the real world of work as well as academic. He wants to see students prepared for both academic and career employment. All professional efforts should be unified to meet the changing expectations and needs of the Arabic language students and society. Structured Arabic language programs must be set to train students as early as the first semester of their Arabic language studies to express themselves orally and gradually expand their communicative skills in order to develop fluent oral skills and consequently a natural feeling for the use of the Arabic language at advanced levels.

Wahaba (1985) opposed the pre-prepared conversations which are based on teaching certain usage forms of grammar. She was flexible in using the Arabic expressions in her setting, and said that teaching an Arabic expression would limit the student's knowledge and lessen the chances of better communication with a native Arabic speaker. Parkinson (1985) also did not like the idea of oral proficiency in Modern Standard Arabic. He also opposed the combination of both Modern Standard Arabic and dialects because, as he stated, it would lead to confusion and frustration.

Ellis (1984) did not like using the "pull-out" approach. Although the approach is used to treat the language problem in better group situations, it might signify the presence of some kind of problem in the eyes of the students. The pulled-out students

might also miss an important concept development by being absent from the regular language class. He suggested an integration approach.

Lev (1991) tried the pre-language approach. This approach gives freedom to the learner by avoiding the grammatical constructions and planned dialogues. Lev's approach was designed to encourage confidence and to promote independent learning. It also provided the ability to speak spontaneously in easy short sentences. To achieve that, the author of Arabic language must carefully select and present vocabulary and structures that will allow the quickest achievement of generic speaking ability.

Cohen and Olshtain (1993) were concerned with the ways in which non-native speakers assess, plan, and execute speech act utterances. It was found that in executing speech act behavior, half of the time learners responded without planning specific vocabulary and grammatical structure or pronunciation. The study suggested that teachers need to complement their students more often and not to stop or interrupt them for correction in their oral production. They also advised teachers to be aware that not all speaking situations are the same, some of them require more demand than others.

Description of Selected Solution

The reviewed literature provided some solutions in dealing with the issue of using Modern Standard Arabic and Arabic dialects. Since the school where the Practicum was applied had used only Modern Standard Arabic for ten years and the

students did not meet the curriculum guidelines, it was worth while to try a new approach. The approach did not exclude Modern Standard Arabic nor did it embrace the dialects exclusively. Arabic dialects alone can not be the answer to solving this problem. The author carefully introduced some of the dialectal vocabulary and forms and simplified some word pronunciation by not using the three short vowels at the end of the word, hoping that this would encourage the students in uttering the words without a great deal of difficulty.

The author avoided using Arabic grammar in the first stage of the Arabic learning process for fear that it might turn off some of the students' interest. The author faced the problem in the classroom daily, but managed to overcome it. He also tried his best to make arrangements with the teachers of the regular Arabic language course to integrate both ASL students and the native-Arabic speakers in certain classes, such as speech and oral composition. The author was not able to achieve this because of difficulty of scheduling. He made different arrangements in the cafeteria, library, and playground.

To overcome the differences in students' cultural backgrounds, the author focused on their common ground. All the students were Muslims and the author concentrated on the Islamic culture. Different cultural backgrounds were used in positive ways, especially when dealing with the heritage of their native countries. Students brought native food dishes to the classroom when learning about food or dressed in their national costume when the class learned about native clothes.

Following is a summary of the solutions which were applied to increase the development of oral Arabic language skills.

(1) Introduction to carefully selected Arabic dialectic vocabularies and forms.

(2) Concentration on listening and speaking skills through the Practicum period and after that through implementation.

(3) Provision of sufficient time for careful uttering of Arabic sounds and words.

(4) Avoidance of grammatical structure usage in the early stages of the course.

(5) Elimination of correction of the students when they made mistakes during their oral speaking.

(6) Consideration of the different cultural backgrounds of the students when planning lessons.

(7) Informal integration of the Arabic-speaking students with non-Arabic speakers at least once a week to provide opportunities for interaction and conversation between the two groups.

Strategy Employed

In order to achieve the goals and objectives, several ideas were brought out in the literature and developed by the author. Oral language skills could not be overlooked and were essential in enhancing the other language skills, the Arabic spoken language could not be ignored entirely, and, finally, introducing planned conversations for the sake of teaching grammatical forms could be an obstacle for improving the speaking skill of the students.

Implementation of the Practicum started on September 15, the beginning of the 1994-95 school year. The students involved were those who were in grades 6 through 11 in the 1993-94 school year and moved to the next higher grade for the 1994-95 school year. The study was limited to 30 students. Two students were unable to participate in the program because they were not in need of this kind of improvement and three others were not able to join the study because of scheduling problems.

The author was in charge of the whole process during its implementation. The students were divided in four groups according to their age and language level. Each group had three classes of Arabic language every week.

The equipment used included a cassette player, flash cards, and an overhead projector. The language lab was used once a week for each group, and the students made two field trips: one to an Arabic restaurant and one to an Arabic grocery store. A third trip, to an Arabic bookstore, had to be canceled; however, an Arabic book fair at the school was arranged in its place and turned into a very educational experience.

The following aspects were considered:

(1) Enforcement in the use of the Arabic language for communications in the classroom, both instructional and conversational.

(2) Cultural concepts were emphasized to make the class more interesting.

(3) Different class activities were included, such as international food, national costumes and clothes, and listening to the Arabic radio station or cassettes.

(4) Use was made of the tape recorder, video player, overhead projector, radio, flash cards, and posters.

Report of Action Taken

The author was not able to start on September 8 as was planned and he could not get 35 students into the program. The main obstacle was the school schedule of the students. The author ended up starting on September 15 with thirty students only. The students were divided into four groups instead of three. The 7th graders were in one group and the 8th graders in another. Students in the 9th and 10th grades were in a combined third group, and the 4th group was comprised of 11th graders. There were eight 7th graders, five 8th graders, ten in the 9th and 10th grader group, and in the 11th grader group seven, for a total of 30 students.

The 7th grade group consisted of a total of eight students, three of which had Arab parents from Palestine, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, two whose parents were from Pakistan, two who had native-American mothers (one father was Egyptian and the other was Nigerian), and one student whose parents were Turkish. All the students were Muslims and born in the United States, except one who was born in Pakistan and immigrated to the United States when he was in the third grade.

The five students in the 8th grade group consisted of two students whose parents were from Pakistan, one whose parents were Arab-Egyptian, and one whose parents were Palestinian-Arab. The fifth student was from Afghanistan of Afghani parents. All the students in this group were Muslim, with three born in the United States, one born in Afghanistan, and born in Palestine.

The background of the ten students in the 9th and 10th grade group consisted of two students born in the United Sates of a native-American mother, one of a Lebanese father and one of an Egyptian father. Four students whose Arab parents were from Iraq, Libya, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia; one student whose parents were native-Americans; and three students from Somalia, Turkey, and Indonesia. All the students were Muslim. Eight were born in the United States, one was born in Kuwait, and one was born in Saudi Arabia.

The eleventh grade group consisted of a total of seven students. Three were Arabs from Palestine, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, one was American, and one was Pakistani. The group also included a student whose father was Turkish and mother American, and a student whose father was Italian and mother Iranian. All these students were Muslims born in the United States except for the Saudi Arabian student who came from England in 1992.

The implementation phase stuck to the calendar plan and achieved all goals and objectives of the study. The author benefited from the Arabic-speaking students who helped in introducing some of the materials by saying the item or acting out some of the situations in all four groups. The author also asked these Arabic-speaking students to use their dialects instead of the MSA vocabulary if they already knew the words. The author used the situation to explain the words and to write both the dialect and the standard Arabic vocabulary and asked the students to pronounce both words and tell which one was easier to pronounce.

One of the problems the author faced in introducing dialects was that the Arab students were from different countries having different dialects. For example, when the students were learning the interrogative pronoun "where," it was discovered that the word was pronounced differently by the Palestinian and the Egyptian students. The non-Arabic speaking students preferred to use the standard Arabic word. When the author asked one of the students about the reason for preferring the standard Arabic, he said that the word is known by all Arabs and also used in The Holy Qur'an.

In the upper grade groups, the students found it interesting to know the dialects and tried to use them since not all the Arab students were using the standard Arabic language in their daily life. One of the students stated that it was better to be aware of the dialects and to try to use them than to speak a language which is hardly spoken by the Arabs.

The author also tried to get the students to be more involved in improving their oral skills. He asked the non-Arab students from Pakistan, Turkey, Indonesia, Afghanistan, and Somalia to bring samples of their languages in and compare them with the Arabic language. All these languages have some Arabic words in them. The author found the word "thank you" to be almost the same in the Persian and Urdu languages. The 'other language' invitation made the class interesting and more fun.

In the first week of the implementation phase, the author introduced the materials as planned at that time. His concentration was on greeting forms "good morning" and on the question "What is your name" and its response. He also

introduced the verbs "*come* in and *have* a seat" and "*raise* your hand." He also introduced the classroom objects: door, desk, chair, and blackboard.

After he introduced himself, he asked the students to introduce themselves and state where they were from. A map was brought out to help the students to point to their country and to try to say its name in Arabic, with the help of the author. The author wrote each student's name on the blackboard and under it his country name He then gave every student a tag and asked them to copy their names and country onto the tags. The students listened to a short audio tape which included a short conversation between two persons as follows:

Good morning.
Good morning.
My name is Ali. What is your name?
My name is Ahmad. Where are you from?
I am from Pakistan and where are you from?
I am from Somalia.

In the second week, the author reviewed the first week's materials and introduced two courtesy forms, "welcome" when they first came into the class and "good bye" when they left the classroom. He also introduced "thank you" whenever there was a chance to say it. He also introduced the question "How are you?" and taught one response for it in both standard Arabic form and in the most frequently used dialect. He continued introducing classroom objects, such as pen, paper, blackboard, and book. The command verb was "write." students were asked to write their names.

Classroom activities focused on speaking skills by listening to different conversations which covered the first week's work and the second week, such as the following between two students, one of them new to the class.

Mohammed:	Good morning.
Ali:	Good morning.
Mohammed:	My name is Mohammed, what is yours?
Ali:	My name is Ali.
Mohammed:	Nice to meet you.
Ali:	Me too.

Mohammed:	Hi!
Ali:	Hi!
Mohammed:	How are you today?
Ali:	Fine, thank you.
Mohammed:	Good-by.
Ali:	Good-by.

In the third week, the author reviewed the work of the first and second weeks and then introduced the command verbs, "listen," "say," "repeat," and "count." He also introduced the questions, "May I sharpen the pencil?" "Can I use the bathroom?" and "May I borrow this book?"

The author reviewed the numbers 1-100 with the students and asked them to count out loud from 1 to 100.

The students were taken to the library where they listened to the librarian's instructions, in Arabic, about using the library. The librarian was instructed to utter the words clearly and slowly and to use learning aids to explain three situations:

1. Finding a book in the index (a picture of a student looking in the index).
2. Borrowing a book (a picture of a student standing by the front desk asking the librarian to borrow a book).

3. Filling in the slip by writing the student's name and the book name (a picture showing students filling out the slip).

When the librarian talked about searching for a book, he held up a picture to show someone looking for a book, and he did the same for the other two situations.

The students were taken to the mini-class lab to listen to previously taped conversations. Seven students could listen to the same tape at the same time.

In the following week a quiz of two parts was given to the students on classroom objects and command verbs. The students were given a sheet with ten pictures of classroom objects on it. The author called the name and the students marked the pictures by writing the sequence number, from 1 to 10, on the top of each picture. In the second part of the test, each student came to the front of the classroom, in turn, stood next to the author's desk, and his name, then named the objects in the pictures, in order.

The students also were tested on the seven command verbs. The command verbs were called out by the author and the students were asked to write the meaning in English.

The students were taken to an Arabic restaurant near the school for lunch. The restaurant is also attached to a small Arabic grocery store. The owner of the restaurant was asked to speak only Arabic to the students as were the waitresses. The owner and waitresses were also asked to speak the Arabic language only. The questions, such as "What would you like to eat?" and "Do you need something else?" were formed in an

understandable way. The Arabic-speaking students were asked not to translate for the non-Arabic speaking students. Samples of the types of food were advertised with the names on the pictures. The students were told to view the food and ask about the name before they ordered their meal.

In the fifth week, the author introduced additional classroom objects, such as paper, notebook, ruler, and eraser. He also taught the students how to ask and respond to the questions, "How old are you?" "What grade are you in?" and "What is the name of your school?" He also introduced phrases, such as "I am sorry," "I want ...," and "I like ..." The command verbs which were introduced were: read, do, don't, and answer.

During the week, the students in each group made arrangements with each other to bring food from home. The dishes came from Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, Somalia, Italy, and Indonesia. The author brought the desert from his country. All but two students brought a dish representing their country background. Before the students began to eat, each described the food and the ingredients if they knew them and pronounced its name in their native language. The names were then written on the blackboard along with the country of origin.

In the sixth week, the author introduced the following questions: "What time do you get up in the morning?" "When do you eat your breakfast?" and "How do you get to school?" The first question was presented using three pictures. The first picture showed a student getting out of his bed and looking at the clock three different times.

The first picture showed the clock set at 5:00 o'clock, the second was set at 6:00 o'clock, and the third at 7:00 o'clock. (These are the common waking times for most of the students.) The second question was presented in a picture where a student was eating his breakfast and the time appeared as 6:30 a.m. The third question was introduced with two pictures: one showed students getting on the school bus and one showed students getting into a car.

The main activity for this week was accomplished by asking each student to find a partner and both students were asked to review all the vocabulary, questions, and courtesy forms with each other; then the students were to develop a conversation and present it in front of the class. The conversations related to the classroom, home, library, restaurant, book store, or any personal area.

For the "cafeteria" activity, the author asked each student from the group to invite a friend who takes the regular Arabic language class to eat lunch with him in the cafeteria. All the students were instructed to speak the Arabic language only and their subject was to be about their favorite food. Two teachers helped with this assignment in observing the students during lunch. The activity was an alternative from that which had been planned for the sixth week.

In the seventh week, the first class day was used to talk about the students' experience with their Arabic-speaking friends in the cafeteria. Each student told the class about his favorite food and also about the friend's favorite food. The author then

wrote the name of the food and its ingredients on a poster and the students helped in drawing pictures of the food.

Questions introduced in Week #7 were reviewed. New questions, such as "Is this a book?" "Is that a pen?" "Where do you live?" and "How many boys and girls are in your family? Complement forms, such as "good," "excellent," and "wonderful" were introduced.

In the eighth week, the author reviewed what had been taught in the seventh week and conducted a test. The test consisted of three parts. In the first part, the students were asked to demonstrate the ability to respond to a question about oneself and the classroom setting, such as "Where do you live?" "How many brothers do you have?" "How many sisters do you have?" What time do you get up in the morning?" "When do you eat your breakfast?" How do you get to school?" "How old are you?" "What grade are you in?" and "What is the name of your school?"

In the second part, the students were asked to respond to greetings, complements, thanks, or an apology. In the third part, the students asked questions about oneself or a classroom situation.

This test was conducted orally. In the case of responding to a question, the author asked the students one of the previous questions and recorded his response in the progress report. Every student was asked five questions. In forming the question, the students were given a response to a question and asked to form the question; such as, "I get up at 6:00 o'clock in the morning." or "I take the bus to school."

In using the courtesy forms, the students were asked to respond to the following: "What do you say if someone did a favor for you?" "What do you say if you accidentally step on someone's foot?" "What do you say if someone scores a basket in a basketball game?"

The activity for this week was trip to an Arab grocery store/bakery in the area. The trip was for two hours. The students, especially the non-Arab ones, had the opportunity to see the type of food the Arabs eat and to read the Arabic writing on the cans, bags, frozen food, and other packages on the shelves. The owner of the store showed the students the kinds of food used primarily for breakfast, and the food used most often for dinner. He also talked about the kinds of meat that Arabs prefer. He allowed the students to tour in the bakery area showing them how they baked pita bread and deserts that are bought in Arabic stores. The students were then given some time to purchase whatever they wanted from the store. The owner and his employees managed to speak Arabic most of the time.

In the ninth week, the field trip from the previous week was discussed. The students shared their experiences in the classroom with each other; and talked about what they saw and liked at the Arabic store/bakery.

The colors and number in the family were introduced this week, instead of the assigned vocabulary, such as school, student, and so on. Most of the vocabulary introduced had been used before. The author made sure that the students knew their

words by writing them on the board and asking other students to say the meaning of each one.

Two activities took place during this week. The students were asked to bring in a piece of clothe which represented their country, or a picture, or description of a national dress or costume. Some students came to school wearing their national costume. Four different types of clothing were shown that day: Saudi Arabian men's clothes, and costumes from Pakistan, Palestine, and Afghanistan. It was a show-and-tell class.

Since the students had already learned the members of the family, everyone was asked to draw a family tree and write the names of their family members on it.

In the tenth week, new questions were introduced: "How is the weather today?" and "How do you feel?" The vocabulary introduced included: hot, cold, humid, mild, rainy, windy, and stormy.

Some expressions about oneself were also introduced, including: "I am hot," "I am cold," "I am tired," "I am thirsty," "I am hungry," and "I am bored."

The activity for this tenth week revolved around the weather conditions. It was winter time and the students conversed with each other regarding the weather conditions and their feelings. They talked about the temperature inside the classroom and the temperature outside the room, weather conditions in general, and everyone's favorite season.

In the eleventh week, a general review took place of most of the materials taught through the previous ten weeks. Each student was asked to express his feelings about the last ten weeks and what he or she had learned and if it had improved their Arabic oral language skills. The student started by introducing himself, stating his age, grade, school, country of origin, and answering a specific question, "What did he learn through the last ten weeks?" Each student was allowed 2 minutes of time for his speech, however, many talked longer than that.

An overall test for materials taught through the period took place this week and continued into the twelfth week. The field trip assigned for this week had been used as a substituted before and the time was used to finish the testing.

On the last day of the Practicum, a "pizza party" was arranged instead of a donuts and juice party. Staff members were asked to join the students; the party took place in the cafeteria during the lunch period.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The problem the author faced was that the Arabic oral language skills of the 30 non-Arabic-speaking students, grades 7 to 11, who had spent at least one year in the ASL program, did not meet the expectations of the Arabic curriculum oral skills guidelines.

These guidelines require each student to demonstrate the ability of recognizing classroom objects and materials; learn the most frequent command verbs; respond to questions asked in Arabic about self and the classroom setting; know and use the Arabic courtesy forms; conduct simple conversations regarding oneself, school, and home setting; and be able to ask questions in Arabic using the right interrogative pronouns.

The strategy of the implementation was based on the following solutions.

(1) Introduction to carefully selected Arabic dialectic vocabularies and forms, and easing the pronunciation by allowing students to utter the words in different accents.

(2) Concentration on listening and speaking skills by encouraging students to listen to Arabic recorded materials in the classroom and at home. Students were required to speak Arabic all the time in class and encouraged to do so by conducting Arabic speaking contests with rewards for the winners.

(3) Eliminating correction of the students when they made mistakes during their oral speaking.

(4) Provision of sufficient time for careful uttering of the Arabic sounds and words.

(5) Avoiding grammatical structure usage in the early stages of the course.

(6) Consideration of the different language levels and different cultural backgrounds of the students when planning lessons.

Results

(1) The first outcome was achieved. Twenty-six students out of 30 were able to identify randomly selected classroom objects and materials correctly in Arabic.

(2) The second outcome was achieved, 25 students were able to respond to 20 of the most frequently used command verbs accurately.

(3) The third outcome was achieved. Twenty-eight students were able to answer 10 randomly selected questions regarding oneself and/or the classroom setting.

(4) The fourth outcome was achieved. The 30 students were able to use at least one form of Arabic greeting, thanks, apology, complement, or complaint. The 30 students demonstrated the ability to respond to at least one of the courtesy forms.

(5) The fifth outcome was achieved. The 30 students were able to conduct at least three randomly selected conversations about homework assignments,

borrowing a book from the library, ordering food from a restaurant, preparing oneself for school in the morning, introducing oneself or others, and discussing the weather.

(6) The sixth goal was achieved. All 30 students were able to orally ask ten questions in different situations, based upon what they had learned, and respond to at least 10 different questions for different situations. They also demonstrated the ability to use the right interrogative pronouns.

All outcomes of the proposal were met. This means that the curriculum requirements of the oral skills can be achieved in three months if the following solutions are applied.

(1) Introduction to a carefully selected Arabic vocabulary and forms.

(2) Concentration only on the listening and speaking skills and provision of sufficient time for listening and speaking.

(3) Avoidance of intensive grammatical structure usage and frequent corrections during speaking.

(4) Motivation and encouragement for the students to speak the Arabic language.

(5) Introduction of the Islamic culture and consideration of different cultural backgrounds of the students in lesson planning and class activities.

Discussion

The author did not introduce the Arabic dialects at the expense of Modern Standard Arabic usage. Modern Standard Arabic is the common language understood by most of the students whether they are Arabs or non-Arabs. The 12 students who had Arab parents spoke different dialects. When the Arab students were asked to say "How are you?" it was said differently depending on the parent's and country dialect. All of them, however, knew the form of the Modern Standard Arabic. The author avoided controversial forms which might confuse and mislead the non-Arabic speaking students. He also avoided the combination of both Modern Standard Arabic and dialects for fear of confusion and frustration (Parkinson, 1985). Only commonly used vocabulary and forms used by most of the Arabs were introduced.

The author neither completely embraces nor rejects the approach provided by Haddad (1989) or Younes (1991). Their approach might work better with adults, but the author agrees on the importance and awareness of the Arabic dialects.

The author found that concentration on the listening and speaking skills, especially in the early stages of a foreign or second language learning process, was significant. Students who missed that opportunity did not show a great deal of improvement in the other language skills. It is very important, therefore, that oral language skills be given priority in the language learning process as stated by Masri (1994) and Aziz (1980).

The ability of speaking Arabic, as the author noticed with the 18 non-Arabic-speaking students, eliminated the effect of the psychological obstacles which might discourage the student from learning the Arabic language. The students were no longer hesitant to ask questions or to conduct a conversation or even to speak the language loudly. The author also noticed that the students performed better in other language skills at the end of the second quarter when compared with the first quarter. Therefore, by speaking the Arabic language the students had more confidence (Lev, 1991) in themselves and this was reflected by their attitude toward learning the Arabic language and their behavior in the Arabic class.

The author planned and prepared the themes of dialogues without any attention to the teaching of grammatical forms. He believes that grammatical instruction teaches students about the language rather than giving them the opportunity to use it (Rutherford, 1987). He is also convinced that grammar does not facilitate communicative speech and teachers should teach only what is easy and learnable and has high frequency value (Ellis, 1984).

The primary objective of the author in planning the dialogues was to address different themes in different situations which extended beyond the classroom setting. The dialogues had to be easy, understandable, and interesting (Wahaba, 1985).

The author did not stop the students when they slightly mispronounced some words. His concern was to see students uttering some of the Arabic distinguished letters which are difficult for non-Arabic speakers. These letters do not have similar

sounds in the English language and most of the non-Arabic students have trouble with them. He always complemented the students who managed to utter and pronounced the letters, or word, correctly (Cohen & Olshtain, 1993). The author, however, does believe in correcting the students in the early stages as they learn the alphabet. It will not be easy on a learner to pronounce Arabic letters correctly if he misses the real opportunity in the very early stages in the language learning process.

It also is important to state that the Arabic vowels are essential in the Arabic language because they have a great effect on the meaning of word. Students have to be corrected because mispronouncing the vowels may change the meaning of the word.

One of the things the author had trouble with was motivation. It was not easy to motivate the students in the seventh and eighth grades to learn the Arabic language. They were not ready yet to think about college where a foreign language is a requirement. They were not even interested to know about better future opportunities for someone who has learned more than one language. They also were not wise enough to see the special relation between the Arabic language and the Islamic religion since the revelation of The Holy Qur'an (the Holy Book) is in Arabic. Their main concern--if they did have one--was that Arabic is a requirement and failing Arabic meant that they would have trouble with their parents and they would have to come back in the summer for further study and retesting.

The most effective motivation the author found, was to avoid a lot of reading and writing and to concentrate on speaking and other activities which may serve the

purpose and achieve the objectives of the class. Students, for example, loved to listen to the Arabic radio station, record their voices and listen to other voices, do educational posters which required designing and coloring, play Arabic games in the class which resulted in reinforcing what they were learning from the Arabic vocabulary, or going on field trips to different Arabic sties, organizations, and/or businesses.

The author did not face trouble in motivating students in grades nine through eleven. Most of them were aware of the importance of the Arabic language as one of the few languages recognized worldwide. They also realized the relation between the language and their religion. They were also aware of the effect that learning the Arabic language would have on their future.

The author was and still is convinced of a strong relationship between language and the culture. A language would be better learned if it is not separated from its culture because the language is part of the culture itself, "a mirror which reflects the culture." Therefore, the author made sure that the culture was integrated into the implementation. Talking about the roots of the words, forms, or expressions was very helpful in learning them. For instance, when the expression "Ahlan wa sahlan" (which means welcome) was introduced, the meaning of the expression and why the early Arabs said it made a difference in memorizing and remembering the phrase. Introducing the food of the Arabs, the clothes, and some Arabic customs and traditions in receiving their guests and at weddings and marriages added excitement to the Arabic language classes.

Other languages, such as Somali, Urdu, Turkish, and Persian, were welcomed in the class for comparison and contrast. This is a recognition of the many cultural backgrounds of the students. These languages are also important and are related to the Arabic language. Many of their vocabulary roots go back to the Arabic language.

Since all the students were Muslim, it was important to introduce the Islamic culture to the class, such as religious celebrations, Islamic heroes, and the contribution of the Muslim people in the development of civilization.

Integration of the two classes, the regular Arabic language class and the ASL class, was not achieved during the implementation period. The size of the classrooms were considerably smaller this year and the number of students too large to accommodate the ASL students. The result of the complete integration which was implemented in the girls' school in 1993/94 school year was not fruitful. The regular Arabic language teachers were not satisfied with the experience and demanded assistants. The Arabic language class has two teachers, one for the regular Arabic language students and one for the ASL students. The agony of having two teachers for two different groups learning in the same classroom is worse than the separation of the two groups.

The ASL students may miss the chance of direct contact with native-speaking Arabs, but they are not psychologically harmed by being isolated in different classes as Milk (1989) stated.

According to an oral questionnaire conducted through the implementation period, all 30 students answered with no when they were asked if they would like to be integrated for one period a week or to be integrated for all classes. When they were asked about the reason, the response of every student was the same: the regular Arabic language classes are very hard, they are considered a heavy load. The ASL students do not see any harm in being in separate classes; they consider themselves as having a privilege. Some of the Arab students whose Arabic language skills could not meet the standards of the regular Arabic language classes are transferred to the ASL program. Other students who are willing to transfer to the ASL program are not able to do so because of new regulations of the school which prevent them from transferring. The school administration wants to mainstream all ASL male students to the regular program.

Recommendations

It is very important that students who learn Arabic as a second language go through an intensive oral language course before being introduced to other language skills. Listening to the teacher, to recorded Arabic language materials, to Arabic radio stations; spending a weekend with an Arab family; attending an Arab gathering, such as Friday prayer and listening to the speech; attending an Arabic wedding with Arabic music, are all examples for ways to develop and enhance oral skills. Students, especially the non-Arabic speaking, have limited opportunities to practice and improve

their skills outside the classroom setting. Teachers could play an active role in arranging these things for the students.

Introducing some of the dialectical vocabulary and forms which are not far away from Modern Standard Arabic or the classic Arabic language and are commonly used in the Arab word is a later effort. Intensive dialectical involvement may lead to destruction and confusion for the non-Arabic speaking student and may create unnecessary racist situations if the author favors and/or uses a dialect from one country and ignores other dialects from other Arab countries.

Integrating Modern Standard Arabic with the dialects is not recommended in the school setting. Introducing the dialectal forms first since it is the spoken language, then introducing Modern Standard Arabic later is not advisable in a situation like this one. It would be unfair for the non-Arabic speaking students because it is not the language of The Holy Qur'an, which some students want to read in the original Arabic. It is also unfair for some of the Arabic students if their dialect is not the one selected for instruction. In addition, it is obvious that the teacher would introduce his/her own dialect and not others.

The students of the program often asked the author about vocabulary they heard from their Islamic teachers or from other Arab students and employees. Teachers at the school come from different Arab countries and speak different dialects.

The author feels strongly, after the implementation, that using the Modern Standard Arabic language, with relaxation of the pronunciation drills, would help the

students in uttering and memorizing the word or form. For instance, it would be easier to say "How are you?" in Arabic "Kayf halak" (when addressing a male person) than to say "Kayfa haluka" (also addressing a single male person). This process needs to be carefully planned and limited to the oral skills. The form just mentioned is not far from Modern Standard Arabic and the students will not have a hard time in relating these two forms to each other. But different dialectal forms were introduced for the same question, "How are you?" which is used by a large population of the Arab world, such as "Ish lownak." This deviates sharply from Modern Standard Arabic. It is true that some of the dialects, such as the Egyptian, is well known in most of the Arabic countries and Arabic dialects from different countries are known to many Arabs, but it is not true that any one of these dialects can replace Modern Standard Arabic or serve as a common language for all Arabs. Therefore, the ideal and perfect position for the author's situation and any other similar situation is to stick to the Modern Standard Arabic language first and make it their target.

It is also recommended that teachers be very careful when they plan their oral language courses to avoid all complicated forms which may serve a grammatical rules. Dialogues should be carefully worded, meaningful, address the needs of the students, and naturally introduced to match specific situations. Teachers must encourage fluency in uttering the language and avoid corrections unless it is a necessity.

The different cultural backgrounds of the students can serve as an advantage for the classroom setting and not as a disadvantage. It may need extra time for planning

the lesson; but this pays off in the long run. The class activities may bring a lot of fun into the class and eliminate the boring factor which forces its way in a second language class, particularly with young children. In the author's case, the different cultures were a great advantage.

The author suggests that non-Arabic speaking student be separated from native Arabs and those who can speak their parents' dialects. The separation must occur in the early stages. The non-native Arabs need plenty of time, at least a semester, to learn their oral skills. The Arabic-speaking student does not need that intensive course and may start learning how to read and write. The integration causes a dilemma for both groups. If they are one group, the non-Arabs students usually do not have sufficient time to learn their oral skills and they are quickly introduced to reading and writing. The Arab students may get bored and lose interest in learning the language if the oral skills course drags on and on.

It is also beneficial in the Arabic language classes if Islamic classes are integrated and have a team-teaching staff. The integration will serve the two subjects. Students will learn the Arabic language first by being introduced to verses from The Holy Qur'an and students' oral skills are enhanced by listening to The Holy Qur'an and memorizing some of the verses.

It is also recommended that students who learn the Arabic language as a second language not be mainstreamed unless if they have a high proficiency in the language, which may qualify them to function in a regular Arabic language class where the Arabic

language consists of five branches and each branch is considered a subject by itself: grammar, poetry, reading, dictation, composition, are each considered a subject.

There are other recommendations which are mostly related to the author's setting. There should be:

(1) Coordination between Admissions and the ASL program before admitting non-Arabic speaking students to the school.

(2) A redefinition of the goals of the ASL program after its ten years of operation.

(3) A review of the curriculum of the ASL program and a rewrite of it if the goals have changed.

(4) A separate ASL program from the regular Arabic language program and assignment of well qualified supervisor.

(5) Hiring of only qualified teachers for the ASL program and training of the teachers who are already teaching the program.

(6) A working team approach by the ASL teachers.

(7) Instructional materials addressed to the students' needs and meeting the students' challenges.

(8) Learning aids matched to the instructional materials and not copied from other languages.

(9) Arabic computer software available for the program.

(10) Elimination of English language instructions in the classroom.

(11) An improved effective role played by the school administration in improving the ASL program.

(12) Parental involvement with the children in the Arabic language learning program.

(13) Arabic classes for non-Arab parents to help them become increasingly involved with their children.

(14) Rotation teaching of all Arabic or all English through the school year.

(15) A revival of "Heritage Day" to recognize the different cultures and to broaden students' knowledge.

(16) A grouping of the ASL students according to age and language level.

(17) A regrouping of the students built on oral and written tests, not according to the book(s) completed so far.

Dissemination

The author shared the results with his colleagues in the school on a "service day." He plans to submit the results for broader discussion on another "service day." The discussion will follow a complete presentation to the Practicum, and the school administrators will be invited to the presentation and the discussion. The author's aim is mainly to turn the eyes onto the importance of the oral skills in the Arabic language program and to share the techniques, methods, and outcome of the implementation. He also aims to convince the administration that the ASL program can be improved and can be effective if given the opportunity. In addition to that, the author hopes that the administration will back away from their intention to mainstream all ASL students: Arabs and non-Arabs.

The author is planning to share the results of the Practicum with other Arab and Muslim organizations who deal with Arabic-as-a-second-language programs. One of these organizations is the IQRA Foundation, which produces textbooks for this group

of students. He also intends to contact the Arab and Muslim schools in Illinois and Michigan for the purpose of conducting workshops on how to deal with oral language skills in their setting.

He also will submit an article about the Practicum to Al-Arabyyah, Journal of the American Association of Teachers of Arabic. The magazine focuses on teaching Arabic in the United States. He may also submit an article to the TESOL Quarterly.

Finally, the author is planning to develop and prepare an approach on how to teach an intensive course in oral language skills, including materials needed for the course, for young students.

References

Abboud, P. (1986). Modern standard Arabic. NY: Cambridge University Press.

Allen, R. (1985). Arabic proficiency guidelines, Al-Arabyyah, Journal of the American Association of Teachers of Arabic, 18(1-2), 60-63.

Aziz, M. A. (1980). Teaching Arabic for non-Arabic speakers. Proceedings for the First National Symposium on Teaching Arabic to Non-Arabic Speaking, 3, 105-108. University of Riyadh.

Cohen, A. & Olshtain, E. (Spring 1993). The production of speech acts by EFL learners. TESOL Quarterly, 27(1), 205.

Ellis, R. (December 1985). Classroom second language development. TESOL Quarterly, 19(4), 783-786.

Haddad, T. (1989). Teaching oral Arabic skills for the intermediate and advanced levels. Al-Arabyyah, 22(1-2), 85.

Heath, P. (1990). Proficiency approach in Arabic language teaching. Al-Arabyyah, 23, 34-37.

Lev, Z. (1991). Two innovations for teaching Arabic. Al-Arabyyah, 24, 1-6.

Masri, Y. (February 1994). Teaching Arabic for the non-Arabs, Al-Mubtaath Magazine, p. 18.

Milk, R. D. (December 1985). The changing role of the ESL in bilingual education. TESOL Quarterly, 19(4), 657-660.

Parkinson, D. (1985). Searching for modern Fusha: Real life formal Arabic. Al-Arabyyah, 18,(1-2), 31-35.

Rammuny, R. (1977). Enlivening Arabic instruction. Al-Arabyyah, 10(1-2), 49-53.

Rutherford, E. W. (1987). Second language, grammar: Learning and teaching. London: Longham, p. 195.

Wahaba, W. H. (1985). The oral skills in teaching Arabic for foreigners: Between theory and practice. Al-Arabyyah, 18(1-2), 71-73.

Wennerstrom, A. K. & Eiser, P. H. (Summer 1992). ESL student bias in instruction/evaluation, TESOL Quarterly, 26(2), 271-274.

Younes, M. (1991). An integrated approach to teaching Arabic as a foreign language. Al-Arabyyah, 24, 112-120.